

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
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FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6986
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
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USMISSION NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PDEV, RH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: DOMESTIC FEELING ABOUT INTERNAL SETTLEMENT

1. SUMMARY: POPULAR REACTION IN SALISBURY TO THE INTERNAL AGREEMENT AMONG MANY BLACKS AND WHITES APPEARS TO BE ONE OF WATCHFUL WAITING. END SUMMARY.

2. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO WAY AT PRESENT OF DIRECTLY MONITORING RHODESIAN DOMESTIC REACTIONS TO THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT, WE ARE ABLE TO GET SOME FLAVOR OF IT FROM RHODESIAN AND SOUTH AFRICAN PRESS ACCOUNTS. IN THE PAST TWO WEEKS, ARTICLES IN SOUTH AFRICAN NEWSPAPERS HAVE ALL CAST THE GENERAL ATTITUDE OF THE WHITE AND BLACK URBAN RHODESIANS TOWARDS THE SETTLEMENT AS ONE OF "WAIT-AND-SEE." THE RHODESIAN HERALD OF MARCH 4 DID
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A MAN-IN-THE-STREET POLL OF TWENTY-FIVE PERSONS IN WHICH IT TOO DESCRIBED THE OVERALL REACTION AS "IT'S NOT ALL OVER YET, LET'S WAIT AND SEE." ALTHOUGH SOME OF THOSE INTERVIEWED BY THE HERALD FELT THE GOVERNMENT HAD COME A LONG WAY THEY WERE STILL CAUTIOUS. THEIR RESPONSE WAS TYPIFIED BY A BLACK PERSONNEL OFFICER WHO SAID, "THIS AGREEMENT IS LIKE A FRUIT. THE FRUIT SEEMS

TO BE COMING, BUT (I'LL WAIT) UNTIL THE FRUIT IS RIPE
AND WE ACTUALLY TASTE IT."

3. RHODESIAN NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS ALSO REFLECT AN
APPREHENSIVE FEELING AMONG LEADERS OF RHODESIA'S
COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL AND MINING SECTORS. JOHN HILLIS,
THE PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION OF RHODESIAN INDUSTRIES,
IS QUOTED AS SAYING, "I HOPE THIS TIME IT WILL BE A
PROPER AGREEMENT THAT WILL STICK." CHAMBER OF MINES
PRESIDENT, IVAN DE ZWAAN, SAID A "MAJOR HURDLE" HAD
BEEN OVERSOME BUT "THERE IS STILL A LOT OF HARD WORK
TO BE DONE" BEFORE THE AGREEMENT COULD BE INTERNATIONALLY
ACCEPTABLE. THE ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE SAID
THE AGREEMENT WAS "ENCOURAGING." THE RHODESIA NATIONAL
FARMERS' UNION REPORTEDLY WELCOMED THE NEWS "PROVIDING
IT WAS A REASONABLE SETTLEMENT."

4. THE RHODESIAN HERALD ALSO HAD SOME RESERVATIONS ITSELF.
EDITORIALLY ON MARCH 4 IT WELCOMED THE AGREEMENT AS A STEP
IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION BUT SAID RHODESIANS STILL HAD "A LONG
WAY TO GO."

5. COMMENT: CONVERSATIONS WITH VISITING JOURNALISTS
ALSO TEND TO CONFIRM THE IMPRESSION THAT POPULAR
WHITE REACTION IN SALISBURY TO THE AGREEMENT IS ONE
OF HOPE BUT NOT EUPHORIA. GIVEN MUZOREWA'S WIDE
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SUPPORT AMONG BLACKS IN THE SALISBURY AREA (DEMONSTRATED
AGAIN IN THE LARGE TURNOUT TO GREET HIM ON MARCH 19--
PRETORIA 1856), MANY BLACKS IN THE CAPITAL MAY ALSO HAVE A
POSITIVE VIEW OF THE AGREEMENT. THAT, HOWEVER, DOES NOT
NECESSARILY PROVIDE A MEASURE OF THEIR LEVEL OF OPTIMISM THAT
IT WILL WORK.
BOWDLER

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